

peace. All too often, they risk their lives in the line of duty. Having risen to the very top of his profession, Chief Landry can take a great measure of pride in his accomplishments and the admiration in which his colleagues and his constituents in Nashua and throughout New Hampshire hold him.

So, Mr. President, I salute Chief Raymond Landry. I will be with him and his friends in spirit as they celebrate his magnificent career on May 5. May God bless him and grant him a long, happy, and healthy retirement.●

#### SOCIAL SECURITY—FAMILY SECURITY

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the real contract with America. This contract was not written last summer, and it was not designed to last 100 days. It was written 60 years ago and was designed to last indefinitely. Mr. President, I am referring to Social Security, our primary contract with the American family.

There has been a lot of talk recently about Social Security, much of it negative. There are many misconceptions about what Social Security stands for, what it does, and how it works. Today, I want to set the record straight.

Social Security is a sacred compact between the U.S. Government and the American people. It is a system that gives help to people who practice self-help. Since it was created by President Roosevelt during the New Deal, it has provided financial security, and most importantly, family security for millions of Americans. There are so many problems in our Nation today that are robbing our families of their security. Crime, violence, drugs and divorce are some of the biggest fears that American families face. I do not want to add Social Security to that list of fears.

Social Security is family security. If any of my colleagues doubt that, consider this fact: Twenty-four million Americans rely on Social Security to provide more than half their income. Almost 5½ million Americans rely on Social Security as their only source of income. To all those millions of Americans, Social Security means the ability to put food on the table, to support their families, and to live independently.

Let me address some other misconceptions about Social Security. It is not the cause of our budget deficit. It has never added one penny to our deficit or our national debt. It is an independent, self-financed, and dedicated fund. Social Security is not welfare either. Today's retirees paid into the system and have earned a secure retirement, not a handout.

I will not rob American families of their secure retirement. I will not vote to cut benefits and I will not support legislation that threatens the Social Security trust fund. Throughout my career, I have voted to defend Social Security. I have defended cost of living

adjustments, which protect against the erosion of benefits by inflation. I have opposed a reduction in the Social Security tax, which would jeopardize the trust fund. I supported making Social Security an independent agency, which will ensure that it is run efficiently and smoothly. Finally, I voted to exempt Social Security from the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

If we do not exempt Social Security from a balanced budget amendment, the trust fund will be in jeopardy. Right now there is a surplus in the trust fund. In other words, there is more money being paid into the system by working people than there is being paid out to retirees. By law, this surplus can only be used to pay benefits, the administrative costs of Social Security, and to buy Government securities. These Government securities become part of the trust fund and earn interest, just like Government bonds that we might purchase as an investment. I strongly believe that without it being exempted, this surplus will be raided by politicians in the name of deficit reduction. This would result in emptying the trust fund of the current Government securities, which must be paid back to Social Security. Make no mistake, this means cuts. It means going back on promises we made. It means saying no to people who have spent a lifetime playing by the rules and contributing to the success of this country. It means that the Government cannot hold up its end of the primary contract with American families. And it means robbing families of their security.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle said, "Don't worry. We won't touch Social Security. We want to protect it just like you do." Yet they were not willing to write a protection into the constitutional amendment. I know I will not vote to raid the trust fund, and it may be true that my friends on the other side of the aisle won't either. But I cannot speak for members of a future Congress, and I don't believe they can either. This is the danger that we faced during the balanced budget amendment debate. I am happy to say that it is a danger that we have temporarily avoided.

I am a middle-class Senator. I have spent my career helping those who are not in the middle class get there, and making sure that those who are in the middle class have the security to stay there. Social Security is the linchpin that holds the majority of our retired citizens in the middle class. Promises made must be promises kept. I will continue to fight for the promise of family security that America's retirees have earned.●

#### TRIBUTE TO CENTRAL FALLS (RI) JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL

● Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the achievements of

25 students from Central Falls Jr./Sr. High School of Central Falls, RI.

These students, Kelly Bianchi, Janeth Blandon, Melissa Casto, Berta Couto, Yolanda DaSilva, Daisy Diaz, Elizabeth Diaz, Michelle Doucet, Susan Freitas, Elizabeth Garstka, Martha Gutierrez, Melanie Kowal, Linda Layous, Rebecca Lussier, Michael Macedo, Juan Manzano, Nelci Paiva, Beatriz Patino, Christine Patricio, Celena Sackal, Kathleen Siwy, Hannah Tarawali, Helena Taveira, Agnes Wec, and Alexandra Zaldana have distinguished Central Falls and the State of Rhode Island through their selection as Rhode Island's delegation to the "We the People . . . The Citizens and the Constitution" national finals competition.

I would also like to recognize their teacher, Mr. Bertrand Brousseau, who deserves much of the credit for the success of the team. The district coordinators, John Waycott and Charles Golden, and State coordinator Henry Cote also contributed a great deal of time and effort to help the team reach the national finals.

This program, supported and funded by Congress, has been developed to educate young people about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The 3-day national competition simulates a congressional hearing in which students' oral presentations are judged on the basis of their knowledge of constitutional principles and their ability to apply them to historical and contemporary issues.

Administered by the Center for Civic Education, "We the People . . . The Citizens and the Constitution," has provided curricular materials at upper elementary, middle, and high school levels for more than 60,000 teachers, 22,000 schools, and 20 million nationwide.

This tremendous program provides an excellent opportunity for students to gain a perspective about the history and principles of our Nation's constitutional Government. I wish these budding constitutional experts the best of luck and look forward to their future participation in our Nation's political arena.●

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, I would like to proceed as if in morning business, but I would like a period longer than 5 minutes.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, would the Senator allow us to do this and then we will give her what time she might desire, then we will close out. I do not think we will be over 5 or 6 minutes.

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Thank you.

Mr. FORD. I thank the Senator.